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Homemaker News

EXCLUSIVE TO STATE EXTENSION EDITORS

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BUSINESS METHODS

FOR TOURIST HOMES

With the house all ready, the appearance of the lawn and yard supplementing the sign "Tourists Invited", the next problem is to make the venture pay.

If the location is favorable, on a well-traveled road, the exterior attractive, and the sign displayed far enough ahead in each direction to give motorists a chance to slow down, some of them may come in.

People continue to travel long after dark rather than sit about in strange houses with nothing to do. It is not unusual for them to stop as late as 10 or 11 o'clock for overnight lodging. Keep the sign and the house well lighted to attract these late drivers. If the lights are dim, a house on an unfamiliar country road looks forbidding.

Profit from overnight accommodations without meals depends on the relation between the total intake and the original outlay, plus laundry and other services. There is usually a standard rate per night in each locality, such as 75 cents a person, or perhaps a dollar. This will never be all profit even though family labor is not counted. Cash must be paid for clean linen and light, and there is the earlier investment in wallpaper, paint, and conveniences.

When the party has inspected the rooms and agreed to the charges, send someone to help them in with their bags and to show them where

to put their car. Free overnight parking is usually expected. In a hotel these services merit tips, but one reason people like a tourist home is that tips are unnecessary. The very act of helping the strangers in these ways gives the feeling that they are guests and makes for pleasant relationship.

It is desirable to have a definite understanding about terms before strangers are admitted. After the guests come in, ask them to register. This is usually a State requirement but always a useful formality. Then show them to their rooms, indicate where the bathroom is, furnish the necessary number of clean towels, a pitcher of drinking water and glass, and ask whether they need anything else. Find out when they wish to be called, and arrange for breakfast, if wanted. Then leave. It is a mistake to talk too much to guests.

What to charge for meals is often a problem. Even if much of the food is home-grown, it is reasonable to reckon its value as if it had been bought. Feeding tourists is one way of selling surplus products. A common rule is to charge twice or two and a half times the value of the raw materials to cover the labor, fuel, wear on equipment, and waste. It will be necessary to keep accurate books in order to know whether or not the business is profitable and as a basis for improvements.

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(Note to extension editor: This is last story in tourist home series.)